

Neither Questions Nor Answers

Rarely has the weather been so spectacular. And the White House fringed by the freshly planted chrysanthemums is a beautiful island of tranquillity in downtown Washington.

But many of the men and women who came out of the President's news conference Friday night and walked through this scene carried with them a deep sense of despair.

They had witnessed a President who would not or could not answer questions fully, and they had seen reporters who could not or did not ask the right questions for a public that cries out more each day for some answers.

The East Room was like a bear pit with over 200 newsmen and women shrieking and roaring for attention, jostling each other as they leaped up and down signaling frantically for the President's attention, ignoring the previous questions and the incomplete answers to press their own divergent points.

Any appearance of a President produces some enlightenment. But the frustrations were as great as the satisfaction, and in the end the session degenerated into a display of insult and bitterness. It was all beamed out to a people that already is in anguish.

Nixon gave a long answer about why he had fired Special Prosecutor Archibald Cox: because Cox had refused to obey his orders. But he said not one word about why he had then totally reversed himself and had given up the tapes just as Cox had urged. No questioner then got the floor to say, "Wait a minute, Mr. President, what logic explains producing a governmental convulsion of this magnitude and then announcing amid the carnage that you agree after all?"

The President casually said in that same explanation that Elliot Richardson had approved of his "compromise" on the tapes that triggered all the trouble. At best that is a half-truth. A compromise is not a compromise without two parties agreeing, as Cox did not. Neither, in the end, did Richardson.

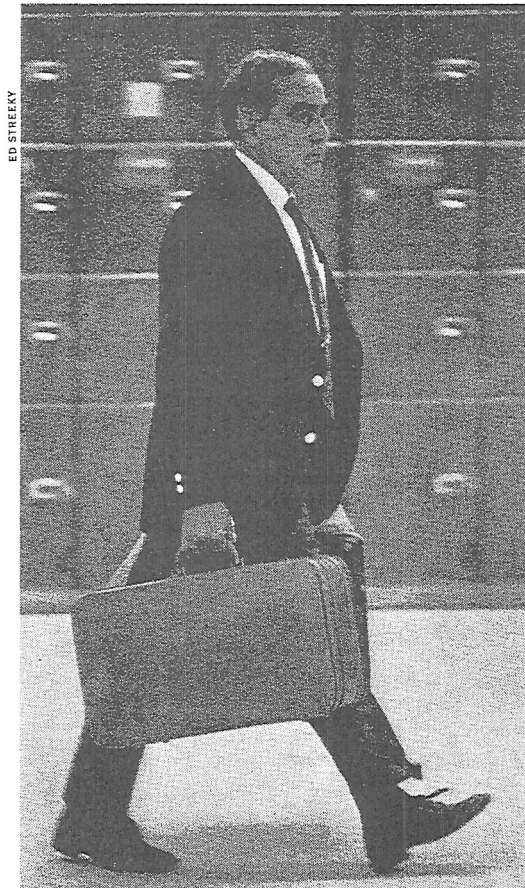
And what rationality explains giving up the tapes but clinging desperately to other documents on the basis of the theory of presidential confidentiality, which is already so shot full of holes? Nixon emphasized his desire to give a new prosecutor the "independence" that he needed to bring the Watergate episode to a conclusion, but then his next statement denied that very independence.

Further, we now have an acting Attorney General who says he will go to court for the necessary documents to pursue the investigation and a President who says he is not about to allow that. Why is it that in this Government nobody seems to know what anybody else is doing or what they should be doing?

Nixon called the stillborn confrontation with the Soviet Union early last Thursday the most serious episode since the Cuban missile crisis of 1962. The next day the Soviet Union said that was nonsense. What is it that prevents the President from giving the nation more details, details certainly known to the Russians? A day earlier Secretary of State Henry Kissinger explained that the order to alert American troops came after long deliberation in a National Security Council meeting at 3 a.m. The President said that he had given the order shortly after midnight. A small thing, perhaps, but why can't the Americans be told the complete story of these actions that jar their lives?

Perhaps Nixon would give out more if the East Room had not become an arena for posturing and verbal bloodletting: skepticism overwhelms reason, anger buries thoughtfulness. It is so big and its staging now so elaborate that it resembles something from Cecil B. DeMille and not a seminar for learning about the problems of the real world.

There ought to be a forum where lines of questioning could be pursued to exhaustion, and a time and place where Presidents and press could meet in a civilized fashion and talk to one another calmly and with respect, even if in deep disagreement. If we can't resolve this problem of communication, then we are going to fail in a lot of other things. The East Room press conference was another frightening display of the anger and frustration at loose in this divided nation and in its Government.



BEBE REBOZO IN MIAMI

INVESTIGATIONS

Where the Cox Probe Left Off

In the five months that he served as special Watergate prosecutor, Archibald Cox more than made good on his promise to follow any trail, "wherever that trail may lead," in his investigation. Cox and his 80-man legal staff brought criminal charges in 14 cases, and at the time of his ouster they were investigating literally dozens of criminal allegations extending far beyond the Watergate break-in. Indeed, it was the unfettered scope of Cox's inquiries that led Nixon to the angry decision that he had to go.

TIME has learned that the White House seemed especially upset about Cox's determination to pursue these areas of investigation:

► The "Town House Project," which raised up to \$4,000,000 in campaign funds for Nixon-favored congressional and gubernatorial candidates in the 1970 election. The operation was so named because it was headquartered in the basement of a private town house four blocks from the White House. Directed by former White House Employee Jack Gleason, the effort was conducted before present campaign-financing laws became effective, and no accounting of it has ever been made public. The story of how the money was raised and what became of it is presumably still contained in a satchel of reports that Gleason delivered to former White

House Counsel Charles Colson in December 1970. Cox's investigators believed that the Town House operation is potentially one of the most explosive scandals in Washington, but White House lawyers refused to provide information about it on the ground that Cox had no claim to evidence bearing on any campaign except that of 1972. (To invalidate that contention, Cox three weeks ago charged a Democratic donor to Hubert Humphrey's 1968 campaign with making an illegal contribution.)

► The handling of anti-Nixon demonstrators at 1972 rallies attended by the President in Illinois and Tennessee, the latter featuring Billy Graham as a booster. Some of the activists, as well as witnesses, have accused Secret Service agents and White House advance men of interfering with the civil rights of peaceful protesters.

► Exploits of the White House "plumbers" that have not yet come fully to light. The Administration declined

to cooperate with parts of such an investigation, claiming that some of the team's activities involved the "national security."

► The White House-authorized campaign to tap the telephones of certain Administration aides and outside newsmen.

In addition to these investigative avenues specifically challenged by the Administration, the Cox task force was looking into a wide variety of other reported criminal acts. They range from "dirty tricks" allegedly committed in behalf of candidates of both parties to various allegations of perjury. Yet the central thrust seems directed at the all but endless amounts of cash raised by Nixon's moneymen during the last three biennial elections—some \$60 million for the 1972 race alone.

The pair of \$50,000 cash gifts from Billionaire Howard Hughes to Nixon's pal Charles G. ("Bebe") Rebozo in 1969-70 is one of the strangest cases. Though

the funds were allegedly for campaign purposes, Rebozo has testified that he never turned them over to anyone's campaign and in fact did not even tell Nixon of the gifts' existence. At his press conference last week, the President commended Rebozo for his handling of the cash, claiming that it was never used because 1) the donation was thought to be potentially embarrassing to Nixon in the light of an internal struggle in the Hughes business empire, and 2) as a candidate, Nixon never wanted to know the identity of his contributors until after the election was over.

Still, investigators for both the Cox staff and the Senate Watergate committee are understandably curious as to why Rebozo would allow \$100,000 to languish for three years in a safe-deposit box in his Key Biscayne bank, as he claims, where he could not even collect interest on it. Moreover, one of the payments was made on the very day that Rebozo and Robert Abplanalp, appar-



COX STROLLING NEAR VIRGINIA HOME

Cox: Ready to Shovel Some Snow

He was dressed in blue jeans and a sweater and already looking forward to a three-month vacation on the coast of Maine, "hiking, riding—and I may even shovel a little snow." In a relaxed and reflective mood, Archibald Cox talked with TIME Correspondent Hays Gorey about his aborted service as special prosecutor:

How did the White House raise objections to your activities before you were fired?

The White House would call [Attorney General Elliot] Richardson and ask, "What does this guy think he's doing?" And then Elliot would take up these questions with me. The question that was constantly bothering people in the White House was, "What limits apply to Archie Cox?" But Elliot was at all times entirely reasonable. There was never anything remotely resembling improper pressure.

Do you think your dismissal was linked to the investigation touching on Bebe Rebozo and the "campaign money" from Howard Hughes that he kept in a safe-deposit box for three years?

I think this has been exaggerated. I don't think that this one thing precipitated the recent events. It is more likely that several things came together.

Were you deeply involved in investigating the Rebozo matter?

We had done some poking around, but frankly this was an area where I gave my staff more autonomy and stayed reasonably clear of it myself because my brother's firm [Davis & Cox] is Hughes' primary counsel. I told my staff to get cracking, and of course I would have been involved in any major decisions as time went on.

Why would Rebozo have kept the money where it was not even earning interest?

Well, I don't know that. But Herbert Kalmbach [the President's personal lawyer at the time], according to his testimony before the Senate committee, kept an even larger sum of money—left over from the 1968 Presidential campaign—in safe-deposit boxes. If you have any knowledge of mathematics, it makes you wonder, but that is Kalmbach's testimony.

It has been charged that the Nixon Administration is the most corrupt in history. Do you agree?

The evidence regarding conduct in high office is stronger and more widespread than in any Administration I can recall, but the question of guilt or innocence remains open in my mind and remains to be established.

Do you think President Nixon should be impeached?

It would not be proper for me to comment. I am sure that any President who refuses to comply with court orders and to abide by the rule of law ought to be impeached.

Do you have confidence that the work you started will go forward without you?

As of today, the Senate and the House and the American people will insist upon it.

Will you play any future role in the investigation?

Well, I'll be glad to help anyone who may be appointed to take it over.

Has this experience left you with any bitterness?

No, it's left me with a regenerated faith in the people's ability to respond and to make a very determined President conform to the rule of law.